
Appendix B

SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACTS

B.1 INTRODUCTION

Background

The City of Riverside contracted with the University of California Riverside - Archaeological Research Unit (ARU) to conduct an archaeological survey of the study area to identify, evaluate and recommend mitigative measures for cultural resources that may be affected by the development of the proposed Box Springs Industrial Park Specific Plan. The study consisted of a check of the California Archaeological Site Survey (CASS) records on archaeological, ethnographic and historic literature pertinent to the area, and a “on foot” survey revealed the existence of 73 sites, mostly milling features, located and recorded within the study area.

Following is a summary of the ARU study prepared for this EIR by James D. Swensen entitled “An Archaeological Assessment of the Box Springs Industrial Park Specific Plan Study Area, Riverside, California,” dated October 1982. Copies of the original report are available for public inspection at the offices of the Archaeological Research Unit, University of California Riverside, Riverside, California 92521.

Environmental Setting

The climate of the area can be classified as Mediterranean or “summer dry-subtropical” and is characterized by long, hot, dry summers and mild, relatively wet winters. The annual rainfall can be from 30 to 50 cm, with bulk of that falling between months of January and April.

Primary sources of surface water in the general area are small springs scattered along fault lines at the base of mountain slopes and in deeper drainages that have downcut in places to expose waterbearing strata, such as in Sycamore Canyon itself.

Vegetation in the Study Area is represented by three plant communities, Valley Grassland, Coastal Sage Scrub, and Riparian Woodland. Agricultural and intensive sheep grazing in

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recent years have eliminated the native plant cover in the Valley Grassland community, which we believe formerly existed on the flat terrain of the Study Area.

In terms of resources important to the prehistoric human inhabitants of the region, who practiced a hunting and gathering subsistence strategy, the Study Area would have been most valuable for seed procurement during the late spring and summer months in the Valley Grassland and Coastal Sage Scrub plant communities. Fauna procurement through hunting, trapping, or jackrabbit and antelope drives, could have occurred within the Study Area at any time during the year and in all plant communities.

Ethnography

The Sycamore Canyon/Box Springs area cannot be definitely assigned to any one of the four socio-political groups whose territories converged at his location. The four groups are the Gabrielino (to the west), Serrano (to the north), Luiseno (to the south), and Cahuilla (to the west). The above names (Gabrielino, etc.) define groups of people speaking common language.

Four basic types of archaeological sites or loci human activity are observable in the archaeological record. In increasing order of abundance these are: 1) the village site (usually a large well-defined area marked by a great diversity of cultural remains and located within 8 km of most of the necessary resources mentioned above); 2) the temporary campsite (occupied seasonally by small groups by short periods and marked by milling features and/or lithic debris from the manufacture of hunting and food processing tools); 3) vegetal food processing sites marked by milling features; and 4) isolated tools such as projectile points, milling implements, or lithic flakes. As the Study Area was in prehistoric times composed primarily of Valley Grassland and Coastal Sage Scrub plant communities with narrow Riparian Woodland strips (or gallery forests) along watercourses, and is situated some distance from extensive oak groves, the types of sites to be expected in the area are milling features, isolated tools, and possibly a temporary campsite or two.

History

Expect for free grazing cattle, the Study Area seems to have received no particular attention until the early 1900's, when homesteads were established for dry farming. Dry farming, sheep grazing, and recreation have been the major activities in the Study Area in recent times.

B.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Previous Studies

Prior to actual field survey of the Study Area, the CASS records on file at the ARU were searched for information regarding previous archaeological research in the area. The records indicated that a 70 acre parcel in the northwest portion of the Study Area have been surveyed by the San Bernardino County Museum Association in connection with a decomposed granite quarrying operation being carried out by E. L. Yeager Construction Company. This survey located 14 sites within the Study Area (CA-RIV-2425-2438), all but one of which are bedrock milling features with no associated cultural debris. CA-RIV-2425 is a large temporary campsite, tentatively assigned to the Milling Stone Stage (ca. 8500-5000 B.P.). In addition to bedrock milling features, artifacts noted included fragments of portable metates, fragmentary and whole manos, hammerstones, and broken projectile points. This site was also the location of a historic period homestead and glass, metal, and ceramic fragments, scattered red bricks, and possible remains of adobe structure were noted just west of most of the prehistoric material. All of the prehistoric artifacts observed were collected and are being housed at the San Bernardino County Museum.

Other studies conducted in the vicinity of the Study Area and important to an understanding of the archaeological survey and excavations at Perris Reservoir (O'Connell et al. 1974), an overview study of paleontology, history, and archaeological of large area east, west, and south of the South Area (Bean and Vane 1979), and the report of a survey of a parcel located immediately north of the Study Area (Gardner 1973; McManis 1978). Concurrent with the study reported herein, the ARU performed a similar study of the adjacent Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan Study Area.

Survey Procedure

After completion of the site records search and literature review phases of the study, the field survey of the Study Area was performed on September 27-19, 1982. The survey crew consisted of the author and Daniel McCarthy and Stephen Bouscaren, ARU Staff Archaeologists. Surveying was accomplished by walking north-south or east-west oriented transects across arbitrarily defined sections of the Study Area with 20 m spacing between surveyors. Transect directions and lengths were determined by terrain features such as deep drainages. In relatively level areas recently disked and thus devoid of vegetative cover, spacing between surveyors was increased to 40 m with no loss of ground or visibility. All boulder outcrops except those on steepest walls of Sycamore Canyon and its tributary drainages were closely inspected for milling features, rock, art, and caches. The area surveyed earlier in 1982 was not systematically surveyed due to time constraints and because

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mitigative measures for sites previously recorded there had already been performed. Review of the survey report indicated that the earlier survey was sufficiently thorough for the purposes of this study. Also, the area under irrigation at the time of the survey (roughly the NW 1/4 of Section 10 [north of the sewage treatment plant] and the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 4) were not systematically surveyed for the reason that impacts from disking and plowing would have destroyed any sites located there. An on-foot reconnaissance was performed in these areas the boulder outcrops were inspected. As sites were encountered their location was plotted on 1:2400 scale topographic maps, descriptive field notes were taken, and the sites were flagged with trail tape. During the week of October 4-8, 1982, Daniel McCarthy returned to the field to complete site record forms, create site sketch maps, and take photographs. Philip Wilke, ARU Administrator and Principal Investigator, inspected the Study Area during pre-survey planning phase and again during the detailed site recording phase.

B.3 SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 73 prehistoric sites were recorded within the study area. Of this total, 14 sites were initially recorded during a previous survey of a portion of the Study area (see discussion of previous studies above this report), and 59 sites were recorded during the survey reported herein. One site has both prehistoric and historic components. As survey of the adjacent Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan Study Area, conducted concurrently, recorded 40 sites. All of the sites have bedrock milling features, and only six sites display cultural materials other than bedrock seed grinding slicks (metates).

Discussion of Results

The surface archaeology of the Study Area strongly suggests that the area was used in prehistoric times almost exclusively for the gathering and preliminary processing of herb and grass seeds. Except for 13 bedrock mortar, the 524 milling features recorded in the Study Area are all grinding slicks with or no depth from use. Most appear to have been used only once, a fact not surprising in an area with such an abundance of suitable bedrock surfaces scattered about the landscape. Portable artifacts noted were also primarily milling implements, except for a few lithic flakes and tools collected from CA-RIV-2425 prior to this survey. CA-RIV-2425 is the single occupation site recorded in the area, and it probably was used as a temporary camp during The late spring and summer months by small groups of seed collectors. It is on the north side of Sycamore Canyon, however, while most of the milling features recorded in the area lie to the south of the canyon. The possibility exists that other occupation sites remain undiscovered outside the Study Area to the south.

Cupule rocks (or more properly, pitted rock petroglyphs) such as the one at CA-RIV-998 are

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one of the unsolved mysteries in the archaeological record of California. They often occur in proximity to habitation sites, and are thought to relate to ceremonial activities, but accurate data about their origins and function are lacking in the ethnographic literature.

The absence of time-sensitive artifacts precludes an attempt to assign an age to any of the sites in the Study Area.

B.4 SITE SIGNIFICANCE AND RECOMMENDATION FOR MITIGATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

It has become customary in recent years to evaluate the significance of archaeological sites in terms of their eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. According to federal regulation 36 CFR 60.6 archaeological site meets the criteria of eligibility for nomination it has yielded or has the potential to yield information important to our understanding of prehistory. It is doubtful whether any of the sites recorded in the Study Area would meet these criteria as an individual site. As a whole, however, the large complex of milling features, one temporary occupation site (CA-RIV-2425), and one rock art site (CA-RIV-998) recorded in the Study Area and in the adjacent Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan Study Area would probably qualify for nomination as an archaeological district.

Except for CA-RIV-2425 and CA-RIV-998, all of the sites recorded are milling features with no evidence in connection with a decomposed granite quarrying operation in the area. It is the recommendation of the study that further data recovery at this site would be unproductive in terms of increasing our understanding of the prehistory of this area. Past and present off-road vehicle and agricultural impacts have disturbed all and probably destroyed much of the cultural debris at the site.

The tentative Specific Plan for the Study Area designates the greater part of the SW 1/4 and the W 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of the Section 9 and the W 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of the Section 4 as Open Space. CA-RIV-2425 and many of the milling feature sites lie within this area, and if this plan is followed the rock art site, the occupation site, and most of the milling feature sites will be protected from the future impacts and preserved for the enjoyment of the public and possible future study and archaeological possessing methods of data recovery and analysis not available today.

The ARU recommends that the Open Space area as presently designated on the Box Springs Industrial Park Specific Plan be adopted, and that the area be set aside as a part of the proposed Sycamore Canyon Park.